



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vietnamvetschapter1.org

JANUARY 2024



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING JAN. 10, 2024

At Chapter 1's January meeting, held on the Zoom app and in person at our office at the VFW, attendees included Bill Ellwood, president; Tim Lonergan, vice president; Richard Reed, treasurer; Jack Crowther, secretary; Directors Dick Doyle, Michael Murphy and Carl Baldwin; members John Pisanelli, Dave Potter, and Shawn Bryan; and associate member Joan Ellwood. Shawn has been a Chapter 1 member for some time but had never heard from the chapter until our recent efforts to update membership contact information. He lives in Berlin, Vt., but was taking part by Zoom from Arcadia, Fla.

A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors was held; no business was transacted.

Bill Ellwood began with a president's report. He thanked everyone for their efforts in 2023, judging it to have been a "very successful" year. Highlights included the two social events, the "Honor Our Vietnam Veterans" luncheon Oct. 11 and the meet-and-greet event Dec. 13 at the chapter offices. The chapter is "financially secure," Bill said, as the treasurer's report below makes clear.

Bill noted mention of the chapter in the national VVA magazine, *The Veteran*, in the November-December issue. In it, Region 1 (New England) Director Justin Lantini reported on his visit to Chapter 1 at the October luncheon.

Via the Chapter 1 website, Bill heard from the Students for Research school in California, where youngsters were seeking to help veterans. The students came across the Chapter 1 site and used links on the site to further their study.

Bill also reported we have three more names to add to the Honor Roll at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Rutland. Anyone who entered the service from Rutland County and served in Vietnam is eligible.

The minutes of the December meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Richard Reed presented the treasurer's report, which was unanimously approved.



Stephen Box (center, with white beard) cuts the ribbon Nov. 21 at an eight-unit housing project he developed for veterans at 140 North Main St. in Rutland. A couple of Chapter 1 members attended. We have offered to help with furnishings, if needed.

As an add-on to the financial report, Bill Ellwood noted that between meetings and with approval of board members and officers the chapter had assisted a member with a fuel oil payment amounting to \$550. The money was provided to the oil dealer and followed a personal visit by Bill Ellwood to the Chapter 1 member to verify the need.

John Pisanelli, who is commander of VFW Post 648 as well as a Chapter 1 member, said the post has raised \$6,740 for the VFW's Fuel Fund, the goal being \$10,000 to cover heat for the winter. Chapter 1, as a tenant in the VFW building, has expressed a willingness to help pay the heating costs but has been waiting to learn the unmet needs of the post. With the funds in hand for the immediate fuel costs, John said he would keep Chapter 1 posted on the post's need for fuel assistance as the winter proceeded.

Bill Ellwood reported that the chapter's efforts to provide Rutland's Open Door Mission with chairs that the mission said it needed have met with a lack of response from the mission, despite efforts of Mike Murphy and Bill to cut through any red tape and acquire the chairs. Promises from the mission to provide the information we need have been unfulfilled, Bill said. He proposed that the offer of the money by the chapter, \$1,127, be withdrawn in light of the mission's lack of follow-through. No formal motion was deemed necessary.

Membership chair Dick Doyle said he's hoping the next membership roster from VVA national includes Andrew Moyer and James Philbrook, whom Dick has been working to get on our rolls since October. Bill Ellwood chimed in that Tom LaFond and Bill Whiteman are two other new members the chapter is trying to get onto the official membership roster after submitting the proper documentation.

Dick noted that our email and "snail mail" address lists still have some errors, as evidenced by undeliverable emails. Dick asked that each member try to recruit one new member during the current year. He noted the chapter has members from about 20 states. Bill Ellwood reminded everyone that vets serving from 1965 to 1975 are eligible for VVA membership regardless of whether they actually were in Vietnam. Dick noted that a life membership now is just \$50. He also observed that in updating the chapter membership list over the last six months, we learned of four or five deaths of members. The chapter has about 130 regular members and seven or eight associate members. Bill is hoping to increase the AVVA (Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America) membership. AVVA members can participate in chapter activities but do not have voting powers.

Bill noted that elections take place in April. Jack Crowther agreed to again handle nominations for officers and directors and will present a list at the March meeting. He noted that anyone interested can put their name in for an office. Otherwise, Jack said, his practice is nominate current officers and board members who have been active, but suggest replacements for those who have not been active. Replacements would come from members who have shown an interest in the chapter, usually by attending meetings. Anyone wishing to put their name forward for an office or board position can email Jack at jack_cr2@yahoo.com.

Bill said he would like to establish a couple of committees to carry out certain tasks. One is a Liaison Committee to "reach out to other organizations." He mentioned the VFW, Visiting Nurses Association, Civil Air Patrol, and Rutland Historical Society as organizations Chapter 1 might work with. Also, a Digital and Technical Committee could take on the task of "sprucing up" the chapter's website. He also mentioned a fledgling visitation program for shut-in veterans. Chapter 1 Chaplain Pete Hults and Bill have made a couple of visits, as a start.

Jack Crowther brought up the matter of putting some of the chapter's money into CD-type accounts as a way of earning some interest on chapter funds. Current CD interest rates are in some cases above 4 percent. Bill Ellwood has looked into the matter and plans to propose investing \$100,000 into such an account. Some discussion followed. Richard Reed will pursue the matter.

Richard Doyle talked about the Leatherstocking Honor Flights taken by four members of Chapter 1 in September to spend a day, expenses paid, in Washington, D.C. Not having a specific figure in mind at the moment, Dick said he'd like to propose a donation to the organization in the future. The next Honor Flight

will be in April. Speaking of his own flight, which included Bill Ellwood, Dick said there were about 100 on the plane, about 65 percent Vietnam veterans. People can check out the program at leatherstockinghonorflightny.org. Bill encouraged Chapter 1 members to consider applying.

Richard Reed suggested that the chapter purchase its own Zoom account following Saturday's VVA State Council meeting, instead of waiting. The chapter has been using Jack Crowther's account, reimbursing him recently, but still dependent on Jack's access name, password and verification codes. This has caused some problems, as it did with this meeting. The subscription should simplify running zoom sessions from the Chapter 1 office. Bill Ellwood made a motion to set aside up to \$200 for the chapter's own Zoom account. Seconded by Dick Doyle. Passed unanimously.

Bill brought up the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America, mentioned above. As part of an effort to build up the organization as a wing of Chapter 1, he proposed setting aside \$1,000 for expenditures of the group as it gets going. Dick Doyle moved to appropriate the money. Seconded by Mike Murphy. Passed unanimously.

Guidelines for handling financial requests was the final item up for discussion. Richard Reed had suggested the establishment of guidelines to clarify the process of responding to requests to the chapter for assistance. His suggestions were in the November newsletter. Richard made revisions and submitted them to this meeting for consideration. Jack Crowther reviewed Richard's draft and suggested it take the form of changes to the chapter bylaws. Bill Ellwood then had these suggestions:

— As, suggested by Jack, allow members attending a meeting to vote on a proposed expenditure. This was a change from Richard's proposal of having the board and officers only vote. Letting all members at a meeting vote met with approval.

— Don't put the guidelines in the form of bylaws changes because that could needlessly tie the Chapter's hands.

As secretary involved in some of the back and forth on this question, I'll offer the following for further discussion at the next meeting:

1. Adopt the following **GUIDELINES** (not bylaws changes). These are basically Richard's suggestions. I'm okay with Bill Ellwood's preference to have "guidelines," rather than bylaws.

Requests for Chapter 1 assistance . must include:

- a. Amount requested and statement of need.
- b. Proof of veteran status (individual) or veterans services (organization) or other charitable purpose of the applicant.
- c. Individual grants must be made with a co-payee, i.e., landlord, utility company, etc.
- d. Organizations must show involvement with veterans or be deemed appropriate by the Chapter 1 Board of Directors.
- e. All grant requests must be approved by the Chapter 1 members during regular meetings, except as allowed under Article XI of the Chapter 1 Bylaws.
- f. Grant applicants are responsible for providing needed documentation to the Board. It is not the responsibility of the Board or individual members to chase them down.
- g. Third party requests may be considered when presented by known parties, i.e, Veterans Outreach, Vet Center, clinic workers, etc.
- h. No individual may receive more than three grants unless otherwise approved by the Board.

2. Adopt a **BYLAW** change to allow the chapter more flexibility in responding to requests for assistance between meetings. This would be a change in Article XI, Paragraph 2, allowing the expenditure of up to

\$2,000, instead of the current \$1,000, between meetings if a majority of officers and board members approve.

I will offer the above at the March meeting as a starting point for further discussion. Note: I have left off a bylaw change I proposed concerning special meetings. Checking the VVA National Constitution, I see that chapter meetings are governed by that.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT CHAPTER 1 MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, AT 4:30 P.M.
BY ZOOM AND IN PERSON AT THE CHAPTER 1 OFFICE AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND**

Here's the Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86468713736?pwd=ZEhybFk3SVMrWDd2STdnQzM1a2ZFUT09>

Meeting ID: 864 6871 3736

Passcode: 487704



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vietnamvetschapter1.org

MARCH 2024



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING MARCH 13, 2024

At Chapter 1's March meeting, held on the Zoom app and in person at our office at the VFW, attendees included Bill Ellwood, president; Tim Lonergan, vice president; Richard Reed, treasurer; Jack Crowther, secretary; and Directors Dick Doyle, Michael Murphy and Carl Baldwin. Members and guests attending included Richard Baker, Wilbur Abrams, James Philbrook, Thomas Purdy, Richard Shum, Louise Clarino, Beth Higgins, Norman and Victoria Hawley, David Potter, Tom Rousseau, Lawrence Caruso, and Al Wilkinson.

A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors was held; no business was transacted.

The minutes of the March meeting were approved as written.

Treasurer Richard Reed reported the total in the chapter's accounts. Dick Doyle noted the chapter is open to requests for assistance, with Richard noting, "We don't want to keep the money. If we still have it at some point in the future, when we dissolve, I don't want to give it back to national."

The highlight of the meeting was a visit by members of the Daughters of the American Revolution, a non-profit group of lineal descendants of patriots of the American Revolution. The DAR's mission focuses on historic preservation, education and patriotism. Present at the meeting and representing the state organization and the local Ann Story Chapter of the DAR were: Janet Weaver, Vermont state regent of the DAR; Cindy Roberts, regent of the local Ann Story Chapter; Michel Susina, vice regent of Ann Story Chapter; Nancy West, past regent of the Ann Story Chapter; and Barb Giffin, also a past regent of Ann Story Chapter. Randy Roberts, president of the Vermont Sons of the American Revolution, also attended.

Cindy Roberts keynoted the presentation of a commemorative flag for Chapter 1 and lapel pins for veterans who served during the period of the Vietnam War, regardless of where they were stationed, and separate pins for surviving spouses. The event was part of the Vietnam War Commemoration, an initiative of the secretary of defense and authorized by Congress.



Cindy Roberts, regent of the Ann Story Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution, presented Vietnam War commemorative pins to Beth Higgins, center, and Louise Clarino, as part of a DAR tribute to veterans of the war. Beth's and Louise's late husbands were Vietnam vets and active members of Chapter 1.

Beside the flag and pins, Cindy presented the chapter with a handsome blue folder recognizing Chapter 1 as a partner in the commemoration.

A number of Chapter 1 members who could not be present had requested pins, and the DAR graciously provided them. The chapter will mail them out, as necessary.

Moving on to regular business, Bill Ellwood noted that member Larry Gold has come up with 50 sets of eclipse viewing glasses for observing the solar eclipse on April 8. It had been suggested the chapter might organize a group eclipse-viewing event, but that never gelled. The Rutland Historical Society will be holding a “watch party,” so the glasses acquired by Larry will be given to the Historical Society.

Richard Reed presented information on investment opportunities outside our savings and checking accounts at Heritage Family Credit Union, where the chapter does its banking. Our present, basic accounts provide minimal interest, but the bank offers “term share certificates” with interest rates of up to 4.2 percent for a year.

Carl Baldwin, an accountant and board member, recommended we take advantage of the term share program, noting that any penalties for early withdrawal are limited to quarterly interest payments and don’t put the principal amounts at risk. Carl’s understanding of the bank’s rules is that if the chapter were forced to make an early withdrawal, the penalty would only apply to interest on the withdrawn amount, still with no risk to the principal.

After some discussion, Richard Reed suggested investing an amount in a one-year term share, leaving about half the chapter’s “operating money” not tied up. After a bit more back and forth, Richard moved to invest in a one-year certificate. Seconded by Dick Doyle. Passed unanimously.

Tim Lonergan shared that at Rutland’s CBOC clinic, operated by the VA, every second Monday of the month at 10 a.m. is a gathering of vets. The vets meet and, according to Tim, “talk about whatever” over coffee.

Dick Doyle, who serves as membership chair of Chapter 1, reminded us that \$50 buys a lifetime membership in the chapter, an attractive price for any vet interested in joining. Chapter 1 will pay the \$50 for anyone who was a previous member and wants to rejoin as a life member.

Bill Ellwood gave a brief preview of the Annual Meeting in April, mentioning the election of officers. There will also be a discussion of plans for the coming year. He encouraged those attending the March meeting to continue attending meetings.

Bill also mentioned Loyalty Day, a Rutland event held at the start of May and featuring a parade, usually well attended. He suggested the chapter might participate on a small scale, even though we no longer have a color guard. It might only require a suitable parade vehicle. Send the chapter an email at vietnamvetschapter1@gmail.com if you want to pursue the idea.

Jack Crowther nominated a slate of officers and directors, as follows: president, Bill Ellwood; vice president, Tim Lonergan; treasurer, Richard Reed; secretary, Jack Crowther; and directors, Dick Doyle, Mike Murphy, Carl Baldwin, Andy Megrath, and Larry Gold. Larry would be a new member of the board. (Since the meeting, Tim Lonergan has said he will not be a candidate for vice president.) Elections will be held at the April 10 meeting. Jack reminded everyone that members are welcome to step forward and be nominated for any of the positions. All positions are for one year.

Next Jack presented two changes in the chapter bylaws for consideration at the annual meeting. The first would raise from \$1,000 to \$2,000 the amount that can be spent between meetings if a majority of officers and board members approve.

The other change concerned meetings of the Board of Directors. However, upon reviewing the national VVA Constitution, he realized that the national Constitution deals with meetings of the membership and the board, so he is withdrawing that suggested change.

Jack also handed out “guidelines” for when the chapter receives requests for assistance. Richard Reed had suggested a need for such guidelines, so that requests for assistance could be handled according to a standard procedure. These guidelines, proposed to be acted on in April, would not be part of the chapter bylaws. The guidelines, as proposed by Richard and edited by Jack, are as follows:

Guidelines for Oral or Written Grant Requests

Requests for Chapter 1 assistance . must include:

1. Amount requested and statement of need.
2. Proof of veteran status (individual) or veterans services (organization) or other charitable purpose of the applicant.
3. Individual grants must be made with a co-payee, i.e., landlord, utility company, etc.
4. Organizations must show involvement with veterans or be deemed appropriate by the Chapter 1 Board of Directors.
5. All grant requests must be approved by the Chapter 1 members during regular meetings, except as allowed under Article XI of the Chapter 1 Bylaws.
6. Grant applicants are responsible for providing needed documentation to the Board. It is not the responsibility of the Board or individual members to chase them down.
7. Third party requests may be considered when presented by known parties, i.e, Veterans Outreach, Vet Center, clinic workers, etc.
8. No individual may receive more than three grants unless otherwise approved by the Board.

Dick Doyle pointed out that a key provision of the guidelines, which the chapter has observed in the past, is that money is not given directly to a veteran. Instead, if the vet is in need of a service or item, the money is paid to the provider of the service or item.

Bill Ellwood said he hopes to establish a couple of committees at the April meeting, including a Liaison Committee to work with organizations like the American Legion, the VFW, the visiting nurses and the Dodge House. A second committee would be designated Digital-Technical, to deal with things like the chapter website, social media, and Zoom meetings.

Following up on earlier discussions, Bill proposed appropriating “up to \$1,500” for upgraded electronics to facilitate our Zoom meetings. This would include a large, wall-mounted television and upgraded computer, camera and microphone. Quotes obtained so far suggest the cost might run about \$750-\$800. A motion was made and seconded by Mike Murphy and Dick Doyle. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT CHAPTER 1 MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, AT 4:30 P.M.
BY ZOOM AND IN PERSON AT THE CHAPTER 1 OFFICE AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND.**



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vietnamvetschapter1.org

APRIL 2024



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING APRIL 10, 2024

At Chapter 1's April meeting, held on the Zoom app and in person at our office at the VFW, attendees included Bill Ellwood, president; Tim Lonergan, vice president; Richard Reed, treasurer; Jack Crowther, secretary; and Directors Dick Doyle, Andy McGrath, Michael Murphy, Carl Baldwin, and Cliff Adams. Associate members Joan Ellwood and Penny Baldwin and members Larry Gold, Dave Potter, Jim Philbrook, Shawn Bryan, Gary Herbert, Marty McDonough, Tom Rousseau, and Jim Freese attended, in person or by Zoom.

A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors was held; no business was transacted.

The minutes of the March meeting were approved as written.

Treasurer Richard Reed reported on the chapter's accounts. Richard is planning to invest about half of the chapter's funds in a "term share certificate" very soon. This will earn interest at 4.2 percent over a year's time, compared to the negligible interest earned on a regular savings account. Richard's report was unanimously approved.

Membership Chair Richard Doyle noted the transfer to Chapter 1 of Perry Melvin from his home chapter 829 in Essex Junction. Chapter 829 is closing due to lack of participation. Perry is president of the Vermont VVA State Council. Dick said Chapter 1 has approximately 130 members, a figure that has held steady for some time. He urged each member to try to recruit one member during the coming year. A membership form can be had online at the VVA national website, vva.org, by calling Dick at 802-376-0846, or emailing him at richarddoyle35@comcast.net.

Secretary Jack Crowther, acting as the Nominating Committee, nominated the following officers and directors for the year: president, Bill Ellwood; vice president, Andy McGrath; treasurer, Richard Reed; secretary, Jack Crowther; and Tim Lonergan, Michael Murphy, Carl Baldwin, and Larry Gold as directors. Jack asked for any other nominations, but there were none. Members then voted unanimously for the slate of officers and directors.

Jack presented a proposed change in the chapter bylaws. The proposed change to ARTICLE XI — Expenditures, reads as follows: "2. The president, or vice president in the absence of the president, may authorize expenditures up to a total of \$2,000 between meetings with approval of a majority of officers and board members." The former limit was \$1,000. A motion was made and seconded and approved unanimously.

Jack then presented "guidelines" for approving assistance to individuals or organizations. These had been requested by Treasurer Richard Reed to assure uniformity in the handling of financial requests. The guidelines are as follows:

Requests for Chapter 1 assistance must include:

1. Amount requested and statement of need.
2. Proof of veteran status (individual) or veterans services (organization) or other charitable purpose of the applicant.
3. Individual grants must be made with a co-payee, i.e., landlord, utility company, etc.
4. Organizations must show involvement with veterans or be deemed appropriate by the Chapter 1 Board of Directors.
5. All grant requests must be approved by the Chapter 1 members during regular meetings, except as allowed under Article XI of the Chapter 1 Bylaws.
6. Grant applicants are responsible for providing needed documentation to the Board. It is not the responsibility of the Board or individual members to chase them down.

7. Third party requests may be considered when presented by known parties, i.e, Veterans Outreach, Vet Center, clinic workers, etc.
8. No individual may receive more than three grants unless otherwise approved by the Board.

Dick Doyle moved to approve the guidelines. Seconded by Mike Murphy. Passed unanimously.

Bill Ellwood thanked Tim Lonergan for his service as vice president for the last four years, Cliff Adams as a director for the past two years, and Andy Megrath, serving as a director the past year after 19 years as president and now elected vice president.

By writing, Richard Gallo, Vermont veterans outreach specialist, requested \$1,300 in assistance for a disabled Army and National Guard combat veteran to cover the cost of a partial denture. Richard provided details of the vet's need and available resources. The veteran is unable to work. Motion by Richard Reed to approve the donation. Seconded by Carl Baldwin. Approved unanimously. According to Chapter 1 guidelines, the money will go to the provider of the dental services.

Bill Ellwood proposed a donation to the Rutland Historical Society, which has collaborated with Chapter 1 in the preservation of our records and posting them on their website. The society is hoping to acquire a book scanner and equipment to improve air quality at their building. Andy proposed a \$2,000 donation. Seconded by Mike Murphy. Passed unanimously.

Bill Ellwood made a motion to establish four committees for chapter functions going forward. They include an AVVA Committee for associate members, a Liaison Committee to work with other organizations on joint projects, and a Digital & Technical Committee to handle online matters like the chapter website. Mike Murphy seconded the motion. Passed unanimously. Another committee will likely coordinate visits by members to veterans who are shut-in.

Jack Crowther proposed ordering 50 Chapter 1 patches at \$11 each and 50 Chapter 1 hats at about \$10 each. These will be given to members, one each. Members or non-members wishing to acquire an additional patch or hat will be charged \$10 apiece. Moved by Jack. Seconded by Cliff Adams. Approved unanimously.

Andy Megrath offered his vehicle for the Loyalty Day Parade May 5. We plan to acquire magnetic signs for the car to publicize Chapter 1's presence.

The annual picnic at the Vermont Veterans Home will be held Saturday, June 15. Vietnam vets from around the state assist in providing a picnic for the residents.

Finally, Bill ticked off several other areas for potential Chapter 1 activities. These included 4th of July celebrations, a possible booth at the Vermont State Fair in Rutland, a scheduled Veterans Town Hall in November, an update (probably on Veterans Day) to the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Honor Roll in Main Street Park, Honor Flights to the memorials in Washington, D.C., social gatherings and/or guest speakers, Zoom presentations on topics of interest, and visits to the state Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Sharon or the Vermont Veterans Cemetery in Randolph. There is an annual Memorial Day ceremony May 31 at the Randolph cemetery at 3 p.m.

Secretary's note: Usually I have a Zoom recording to help reconstruct the meeting while preparing the minutes. This time I failed to record it, so the above were written based on the notes I took. Feel free to suggest any errors or omissions.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT CHAPTER 1 MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, AT 4:30 P.M.
BY ZOOM AND IN PERSON AT THE CHAPTER 1 OFFICE AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND.**



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vietnamvetschapter1.org

JUNE 2024



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING JUNE 12, 2024

At Chapter 1's June meeting, held on the Zoom app and in person at our office at the VFW, attendees included Bill Ellwood, president; Andy McGrath, vice president; Richard Reed, treasurer; Jack Crowther, secretary; and Directors Tim Lonergan, Michael Murphy, Carl Baldwin, and Larry Gold. Also present were members Shawn Bryan, new member Perry Melvin, Tom Rousseau, Al Wilkinson, and Sandy Hayward, and associate members Joan Ellwood and Penny Baldwin.

A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors was held; no business was transacted.

The minutes of the April meeting were approved as written.

Treasurer Richard Reed's report was unanimously approved.

Preceding the regular meeting, we had a gathering of those interested in committees, which Bill Ellwood appoints. Bill thanked members for efforts already made and under way on various fronts. Looking forward, committees include: Housing and Outreach, chaired by Jack Crowther; Tech and Social Media, chaired by Larry Gold with Jack as a member; Membership, chaired by Dick Doyle with Mike Murphy as a member; Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA), to include all AVVA members; and Liaison, a committee to foster ties with other local groups we can collaborate with. As part of the liaison mission, Al Wilkinson and Tom Rousseau, both Air Force veterans, will be making contact with the local Civil Air Patrol group to explore working together. The Rev. Pete Hults, chaplain of Chapter 1, has been visiting shut-in veterans.

In terms of membership, Mike Murphy reported 133 members, as of the end of April. Mike has been tracking down members whose addresses on our roster are invalid. Thomas Truex and Bill Whiteman are new members. Sadly, David Cain, David Gilman, and Robert Fontaine are deceased. Mike is still hoping to find the location or status of James Lay (last known address Michigan), John Leonti (last known address North Canton, Ohio), Arthur Massey (Klamath Falls, Ore.), William Picknell, (Candia, N.H.), and Robert Slabey (South Bend, Ind.). If any of you know anything about these five, please notify Mike through the chapter email address, vietnamvetschapter1@gmail.com.

Bill read a thank-you note from a veteran the chapter assisted with a dental bill, and from the Rutland Historical Society, to whom we donated \$2,000 for a book scanner and some vacuuming equipment.

We approved an \$80 donation for food for a picnic for the residents of the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington on June 22. Vietnam vets from around the state will prepare a cookout for the veterans



Chapter 1 Vice President Andy McGrath congratulates Rory Landrie, winner of Chapter 1's \$2,000 scholarship for a graduate



Peg Gibbud (above right) receives well wishes at a gathering at Tomasi's in Fair Haven on June 9 in tribute to her husband, Jon Pintello. A longtime treasurer of Chapter 1 and participant in many activities, Jon died April 30 of a blood cancer attributed to Agent Orange exposure. He is shown in 1997 as part of a color guard at the Rutland fairgrounds.

and then hold their regular VVA State Council meeting. Anyone wanting to take part should let Perry Melvin know by June 15. His email is usmedocvt@yahoo.com.

Three VVA chapters in Vermont — Brattleboro, Williston, and Brattleboro — have disbanded. Chapter 1 is happy to have any of their members join Chapter 1. A Chapter Transfer Form to fill out can be found at the national VVA website under the Info for Members page. Click on the “Membership, Information, Guides and Forms” listing. Chapters still operating, besides ours, include St. Albans, Bennington and Chester.

Andy Megrath described the Honor Flight he took part in recently, including overnight stays in Plattsburgh, the flight to Washington, D.C., visiting the military memorials in the Capitol, and meals. It was a great time and is recommended to all vets. Application for Honor Flights out of Albany or Plattsburgh can be found at their websites, leatherstockinghonorflightny.org (Albany) or northcountryhonorflight.org (Plattsburgh).

Chapter 1 member Sandy Hayward and Chris Chapman appeared on behalf of the RISE Rutland/Hanamaki Student Exchange, which sponsors visits to Japan and Rutland by Rutland High School and Rutland Middle School students. It was formerly the Rutland/Ishidoriya Student Exchange and has a 30-year history of across-the-globe exchanges. Six students will be traveling to Japan later in June for eight days. In turn, Hanamaki students will visit Rutland in the fall. Chris Chapman, a veteran himself and chaperone for the trip, said a major donor to the program had been lost, leaving a fundraising gap. He requested a contribution, noting that the students have been raising money to reach the \$25,000 goal to travel to Japan and then host the Japanese students in the fall. After some discussion, Larry Gold moved to donate \$4,000 to complement the \$18,200 already raised. Seconded by Tim Lonergan. Passed unanimously. When they return, the students will make a presentation to the chapter on their trip.



Chris Chapman, appears at the Chapter 1 meeting June 12 on behalf of the RISE Rutland/Hanamaki Student Exchange, to which the chapter made a \$4,000 donation.

The chapter approved making a \$100 donation to the Wallingford Rescue Squad in memory of Donald Shedd, a World War II Marine vet who died recently at 101. He was the father of Bradford Shedd, a Chapter 1 member. Chapter 1 extends its condolences.

The \$2,000 Chapter 1 Stafford Technical Center Scholarship for this year has been awarded to Rory Landrie of the Health Careers program. Rory is the granddaughter of Carl Nickerson, a veteran. Having already received licenses as a licensed nursing assistant, phlebotomist and medical assistant, she plans to continue her education in the field of radiology. Her instructor at Stafford, Courtney



Andy Megrath and Chris Morgan in Andy's Mustang convertible (above) and Dave and Carol Currier in a BMW convertible represented Chapter 1 in Rutland's annual Loyalty Day Parade May 5. Tops were up due to rain.



Dumas, described Rory as “one of the most dedicated and hard-working individuals” and said that trait extended beyond the classroom. “Rory has also managed a job when she was not studying or attending classes,” her teacher said.

There was discussion about a meeting for Vietnam vets at Rutland’s VA Community Based Outreach Clinic (CBOC) with a mental health counselor. Although four showed up for what was to be an initial meeting recently, it had not been scheduled. We can update you once this gets off the ground.

It was reported that four men and two women are currently living at the Dodge House for homeless veterans in Rutland. Chapter 1 has in the past had close ties to the facility, but not since its recent closing and change of leadership.

Any vet who did not receive a high school diploma is now entitled to one, assuming his or her high school is still in existence. Contact the Office of Veterans Affairs in Montpelier if interested.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT CHAPTER 1 MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, AUG. 14, AT 4:30 P.M.
BY ZOOM AND IN PERSON AT THE CHAPTER 1 OFFICE AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST.,
RUTLAND.**

HERE'S THE LINK:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89158674450?pwd=HKxxanzaqLnuApog7cQrdXwgl0JBbi.1>

Meeting ID: 891 5867 4450

Passcode: 103742



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vietnamvetschapter1.org

AUGUST 2024



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING AUGUST 14, 2024

Secretary's Note: In the interest of getting out the newsletter/minutes in a timely manner, since I'm leaving on a trip today (Aug. 15), I'm submitting this in abbreviated form, rather than my more detailed style. I have my hand-written notes and recollection of the meeting, in case there are questions about the meeting.

Here is a summary of the meeting:

Approximately 12 members/associate members attended.

Minutes of June meeting were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's report was approved unanimously.

Membership stands at 129.

Following presentations by Don Adams, president of the Evergreen Cemetery Board of Trustees, and Tom Giffin, Rutland Cemetery Commissioner, a motion was made and seconded to donate \$5,000 to the group to facilitate the restoration of the organization. The Evergreen organization has been reorganized after a period of financial decline. The motion included the fact that the donation is made in memory of the approximately 1,400 veterans buried in Evergreen. Motion passed unanimously.

Don and Tom reported that about 10 percent of the 14,500 persons buried in the cemetery are veterans. Three employees are paid about \$27,000 in salary. That is, the total payroll is \$27,000.

A motion was made and unanimously approved to continue donating \$500 a month to No One Left Behind, which assists Afghans who helped the U.S. military during that war, and \$200 a month to Save the Children, a charity providing aid to children in the world's trouble spots. We began these donations a year ago May. Both charities are rated four stars, the highest rating, by Charity Navigator.

Treasurer Richard Reed and Tom Jackson have been recertified for five years as service officers. Richard is independent. Tom works for the state Office of Veterans Affairs.

We voted to have Jack Crowther contract to have the sign at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial repainted in anticipation of Veterans Day in November.

Larry Gold presented figures for upgrading the chapter's website and email and enabling possible social media activity. Further action is anticipated in the future.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT CHAPTER 1 MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, OCT. 9, AT 4:30 P.M.
BY ZOOM AND IN PERSON AT THE CHAPTER 1 OFFICE AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND.**

HERE'S THE LINK:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82897495069?pwd=2Hbes3NgbM2p74qQYo9I5I9LaMz0OF.1>

Meeting ID: 828 9749 5069

Passcode: 016799



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vietnamvetschapter1.org

OCTOBER 2024



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING OCTOBER 9, 2024

Approximately 17 members/associate members attended, along with students and chaperones from the RISE exchange program with Japan and others seeking Chapter 1 assistance. As well as being well-attended, this was one of the longest meetings in memory, lasting more than two-and-a-half hours! It was noted that three past presidents, Mark Truhan, John Bergeron, and Andy Megrath attended, as did current President Bill Ellwood.

Minutes of the August meeting were approved unanimously.

The treasurer's report was approved unanimously.

Membership chair Dick Doyle said membership stands at about 131, with a few additions balancing out some passings. Some new memberships are in the works, including a rejoining of Tom Reed, a charter member from Chapter 1's founding in 1980.

Chapter 1 is sponsoring the food for the Veterans Town Hall scheduled for Friday, Nov. 8 at the Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer St., Rutland. The event runs from 6 to 7:30 p.m. and is free. A free dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m. but requires preregistration at vtvetstownhall.org. The program invites vets to speak of their experiences and what their service means to them. Non-veterans are invited to attend and listen. More information is on the website.

John Pisanelli, Commander of VFW Post 648, where Chapter 1 has its offices, has provided us an estimate of about \$1,400 for renovation of the second floor bathrooms that Chapter 1 uses. Labor will be donated. The chapter would like to spruce up the bathrooms and contribute to the cost. After reviewing the quote, we agreed that we are interested in a more ambitious project, including new flooring. Andy Megrath moved that the Chapter allocate \$5,000 toward the work and provide John with some suggestions for additional work beyond what the quote covered. Jack Crowther will communicate with John on the details.

Chris Chapman, a Rutland Middle School teacher and chaperone for the RISE student exchange program with Hanamaki, Japan, appeared with six students who made the trip earlier this year. Each of the students gave highlights of the trip, which Chapter 1 supported with a \$4,000 donation after a major donation fell through. The group, which will be hosting a Japanese contingent, will be providing the chapter a slide show of the trip.

Audrey Bridge, executive director of the Rutland Community Cupboard, presented a summary of the “food shelf” activities in a request for financial support. She cited recent increases in people’s need for food, noting the families served had grown from 60 when she started to 1,400. She is seeking to raise \$55,000 to fund operations and is currently at about \$29,000. The organization does get food donations but receives no state, federal or municipal funds.

The chapter took no action on the request at the meeting. Subsequently a proposal was made to the Chapter 1 board to donate \$2,000 to the Community Cupboard. Our bylaws allow for donations up to that amount to be made between meetings if a majority of officers and board members approve.

Richard Gallo, a veterans outreach specialist long active in the area, appeared on behalf of a retired Marine and Army national guardsman. The former master sergeant is facing a financial emergency to pay for winter fuel and costly dental work. His daughter is providing some assistance. After discussion and questioning, Shawn Bryan moved to donate \$500 for fuel assistance. Seconded by Andy Megrath. Passed unanimously. Richard is welcome to seek further help for the dental work at a later date.

On Veterans Day, Monday, Nov. 11, the chapter will be updating the Honor Roll at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Seven names will be added to the 350 already on the Honor Roll. They are Frank Belock, Grenville Day, Thomas Holland, and Michael Sule, all of Rutland; Albert Mallette and Freeland Mattison, both of Castleton, and Walden Pratt of Wells. The ceremony will be held at 10 a.m. at the Memorial.

There was a lively discussion about whether to include an eighth name, but a decision was postponed to a later date. The issue was that while the veteran had served in Vietnam and had grown up in Rutland, his “home of record” was Windsor County. According to the rule for inclusion on the Honor Roll, the veteran must have entered the service from Rutland County. The veteran in question moved to Springfield in the fall of his senior year of high school. Just after graduation he joined the Marines.

Michael Murphy, a schoolmate of the individual, argued in favor of making an exception, while Andy Megrath favored sticking to the rule. Opinion was divided. Ultimately President Bill Ellwood pushed through a pause in the decision until more members can weigh in. Because of production deadlines, the name cannot be included in the Nov. 11 Honor Roll update.

Jack Crowther noted that Mike Canty of Proctor had donated his services in repainting the sign at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans in anticipation of Veterans Day. The chapter will hold a work party on Saturday, Nov. 9, to tidy up the memorial before the ceremony.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT CHAPTER 1 MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, DEC. 11, AT 4:30 P.M.
BY ZOOM AND IN PERSON AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND. A BRIEF BUSINESS
MEETING WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A SOCIAL GATHERING DOWNSTAIRS AT THE VFW.**



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vietnamvetschapter1.org

DECEMBER 2024



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING

DECEMBER 11, 2024

The photo to the right shows about half the turnout for our Dec. 11 meeting and social event downstairs at the VFW function room. Chapter 1 recently donated a big-screen television, visible in the right rear, to the VFW, enabling Zoom participation. We have a similar setup upstairs at the Chapter 1 offices, but chose the ground floor for its easier access and convenience in offering refreshments.



The meeting was open to Chapter 1 members and guests, with refreshments arranged by Chapter 1 President Bill Ellwood and wife Joan.

The meeting began with Bill reviewing Chapter 1's "fairly active year" just ended and looking ahead to 2025, when the chapter will mark its 45th anniversary. Another possible feature of the year ahead may be a hosting of a regional Vietnam Veterans of America conference, likely in June or July.

The minutes of the October meeting were approved. Richard Reed offered a correction of the August meeting minutes, clarifying that he and Tom Jackson are service officers under the VVA State Council and not the state of Vermont.

Richard's had mailed out his treasurer's report ahead of the meeting. It was approved.

Membership chair Dick Doyle said membership stands at 134. If your secretary's memory serves, that is about as high as it has ever been. New signups, the fruit of outreach efforts by Dick, Bill Ellwood and others have offset declines due to the passing of members. Among the new members is Don Amorosi of Glens Falls, a longtime friend of Chapter 1, who has transferred in to the chapter; Louis Rousseau of Rutland; and Louis Wierzbicki of Rutland. Don and Louis Rousseau were on submarines; Louis Wierzbicki was at Bien Hoa in Vietnam.

At Bill Ellwood's request, we voted unanimously to approve a donation of \$2,500 to Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports. Approved by directors between meetings, the donation was above our charter limit of \$2,000 for such between-meetings donations, even though it was the same amount donated last year. The

donation had to be made on a timely basis in order to qualify for a matching donation to VASS from another source.

VVA State Council Chair Perry Melvin said the next State Council meeting will be Jan. 4, beginning at 11 a.m. at the Chapter 1 offices in Rutland. It will be a Zoom-only meeting, due to winter travel uncertainties.

Bill Ellwood reported that the Farmacy program, which is directed by Emma Hileman, will be a guest at our February meeting. Emma is seeking financial support for the program, which provides fresh produce during the growing season to persons, based on doctors' recommendations.

Bill Ellwood made a pitch for a \$2,500 donation to the local Civil Air Patrol chapter, whose members played a ceremonial role in our Veterans Day event at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The organization provides a military style of training for young people, similar to the Boy Scouts and is sometimes a precursor to enlistment in the Air Force, as it was for Bill. It receives no federal funds. Tom Rousseau, Al Wilkinson, and Bill have reached out to the CAP chapter to foster a relationship with Chapter 1. However Tom has moved to Glens Falls, and Al is moving to St. Albans. After some discussion, it was decided to donate \$500 to the local CAP chapter and to invite them to a future meeting to outline their need for further support. Joann Larson is the local squadron commander.

The next chapter meeting will be Wednesday, Feb. 12, at 4 p.m., downstairs at the VFW, 15 Wales St., in Rutland. A dance performance, arranged by Andy Megrath, will take place at 5 p.m., last about a half-hour, and is open to any VFW members or other veterans and family members..

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

The next chapter meeting will be Wednesday, Feb. 12, 4 p.m., downstairs at the VFW